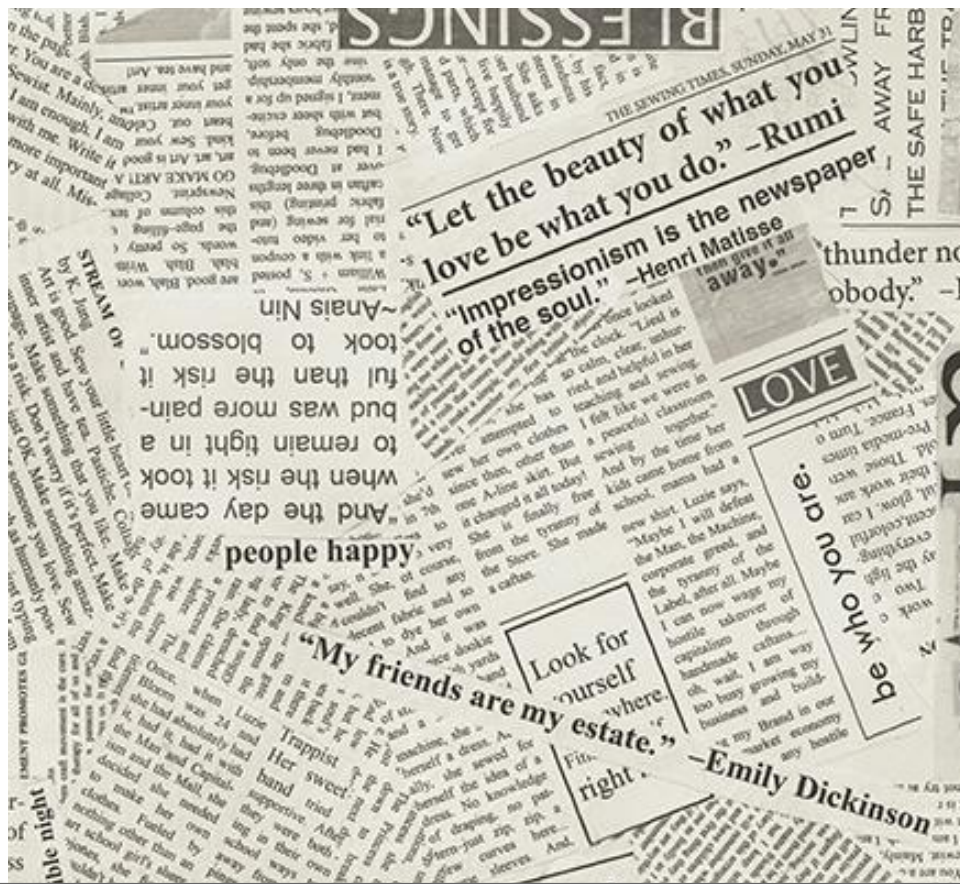


August 2023 Environmental Scan

A dark green diagonal shape that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, covering the bottom half of the page.

In the news:

- StatCan census workers experience high levels of violence and harassment
- Ontario MPP permanently removed from party after misconduct allegations substantiated
- Half of migrant and refugee women we spoke to have been sexually harassed in Australian workplaces



StatCan census workers experience high levels of violence and harassment

Many Statistics Canada (StatCan) workers who went door-to-door to collect data for the 2021 census did not have an easy time of it.

They logged 680 injury reports in that year overall, reported The Canadian Press, which obtained that data through access-to-information law.

That included more than 280 cases of harassment or violence, and at least 15 assaults by members of the public. In the most extreme cases, employees were punched, threatened with firearms, spat on or sexually assaulted, according to the report, which was published on CTV News.

Three in five workers (61%) have observed instances of sexual harassment, but just 7% of either those who've seen sexual harassment happen or have had it happen to them report the issue to HR, according to a previous report.

StatCan workers also reported 137 cases of people's dogs being aggressive or biting employees and 158 reports of slips, trips or falls.

Nova Scotia worker victim of fraud, then unjust dismissal for workplace argument

A company did not have the authority to order a worker to pay back company money she lost in a phone scam or just cause to fire the worker after she threw a pen at a colleague, the Nova Scotia Labour Board has ruled.

The worker started work with a Mary Brown's fried chicken restaurant operated by DC Ventures in Halifax in October 2018. She was initially hired to be a cashier, later becoming a supervisor and then the store manager.

When the worker was hired, she signed a cash agreement that indicated that she took responsibility for the \$200 float in the cash register drawer for the duration of her shift. If her float didn't balance at the end of her shift, she agreed to pay any shortages.

Mary Brown's also had a team member handbook that included a Workplace Anti-violence, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy. The policy defined workplace violence as "the exercise, statement, or behaviour of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker." It also defined workplace harassment as "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or workplace sexual harassment."

2 women who complained about harassment at UPEI permanently released from silencing deals

Two women who signed non-disclosure agreements with the University of Prince Edward Island a decade ago have been permanently released from the threat of being sued by UPEI for speaking out about their experiences, with the university's board of governors issuing an unequivocal apology.

Wendy Carroll and Erin Casey, who have asked that their names now be made public, filed complaints of sexual harassment in 2012 against the university's former president, Alaa Abd-El-Aziz. Eventually they took those complaints to the P.E.I. Human Rights Commission before being offered settlements and signing non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with the university in 2013.

"After 11 years of silence, we feel heard," Carroll and Casey said in a written statement Thursday following the news that UPEI had permanently released them from the terms of their NDAs.

"We acknowledge UPEI's apology for the personal, professional, and reputational harms we've suffered in the past decade."

University of Lethbridge being sued by controversial prof for violating freedom of expression

Dr. Frances Widdowson, professor Dr. Paul Viminitz and student Johan Pickle are suing the University of Lethbridge for allegedly violating their freedom of expression and assembly by cancelling an event where Widdowson would have spoken about “how wokeism threatens academic freedom.”

Wokeism is defined as the promotion of liberal progressive ideologies and policy as an expression to injustices and prejudices.

“The ideology of wokeism, which demands that the identities of oppressed groups (and) the views of oppressed groups be accepted as being true, even if one is disputing the claims that are being made,” said Widdowson.

The lawsuit is being headed by the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms.

In 2022, Viminitz invited Widdowson to speak at the university about how “wokeism” is a threat to free speech, open inquiry and dissent. Many students opposed her speech due to some comments Widdowson had previously made.

In the wake of code of conduct report, Kamloops council statement says city business persists

Kamloops council released a statement saying it's committed to continuing city business after a third-party investigation reportedly found the mayor violated council's code of conduct by demeaning some staff members, including the CAO.

In a statement released on Friday, Kamloops city council said it is “committed to serving Kamloops residents and moving our community forward.”

“In light of recent media reports, council wants to express its full confidence in the city's Chief Administrative Officer David Trawin, and the entire senior leadership team at the City of Kamloops,” the statement said.

“Through their leadership, the business of the city continues to get done, including several major initiatives that have already moved forward.”

On Wednesday, reporting from Kamloops this Week showed a third-party investigation into workplace bullying, which got underway in February, concluded Mayor Reid Hamer-Jackson violated council's code of conduct several times by disrespecting or demeaning three staff members, including Trawin.

The investigator determined the mayor did not violate the code of conduct with respect to allegations brought forward by a fourth staff member.

Manager who grabbed worker breached safety rules: arbitrator

A manager at an Ontario company breached safety rules when he grabbed a worker he believed was being insubordinate, an arbitrator has ruled.

Cargill Limited operates a beef harvest and livestock byproduct facility in Guelph, Ont. The worker was a skid off operator who was hired in 2010 and worked in the skid off area since 2015.

On June 12, 2019, the facility's general manager was walking through the skid and warehouse area of the shipping and warehouse department. In that area, employees took boxes of product off conveyor belts and stacked them on pallets or skids.

The general manager saw a trainee talking to other employees while standing in the middle of an empty pallet. He approached and explained that standing on pallets wasn't permitted because of food safety concerns, and the trainee stepped off the pallet.

Ontario MPP permanently removed from party after misconduct allegations substantiated

An Ontario MPP has permanently been removed from the NDP caucus after an independent investigation found that allegations of workplace misconduct levied against him earlier this year were substantiated.

Michael Mantha, the elected representative for Algoma-Manitoulin, was ejected from the Ontario New Democratic Party caucus in April after the claims were brought forward.

In a statement released Tuesday, the NDP said that a third-party investigator was retained to look into the allegations and that several of the specific claims were “substantiated.”

“The investigator based these findings on interviews with multiple witnesses, including those identified by MPP Mantha, as well as other documentary evidence, including video,” the statement reads.

The specific nature of the allegations has not been publicly shared, although the NDP told CTV News Toronto it involved behaviour that violated the party’s workplace harassment policy.

The NDP said that while Mantha initially participated in the investigation, he later “refused to personally attend an interview and did not provide any documents to the investigator as requested.”

Village of Alix council plans ahead with workplace violence policy

To follow the provincial government workplace safety codes the Alix village council discussed and approved its workplace violence policy. The resolution was passed at the Aug. 2 regular meeting of council.

Village Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Michelle White brought back for council's perusal the draft workplace violence policy, a requirement she noted under the Government of Alberta's occupational health and safety code (OHSC).

White noted councillors had discussed this draft policy at a previous meeting and she investigated three topics they wished more information on. It turns out, stated the CAO, harassment doesn't have to be defined in the violence policy as the provincial government defines them separately.

Second, the personnel policy, which discusses workplace harassment, doesn't address violence so doesn't need to be mentioned in the draft policy.

Third, the relevant sections of OHSC were added to Alix' draft violence policy.

Coun. Tim Besuijen asked if the violence policy addresses the fact criminal charges may be involved. The CAO responded the violence policy mentions the fact it does not impede a worker's rights under other laws and that workers are welcome to follow other paths if they wish, which may include the filing of criminal charges.

Lizzo's tour dancers support singer in midst of toxic workplace lawsuit

A social media account representing Lizzo's current dance troupe has voiced support for the singer after several of her former backup dancers filed a lawsuit this month alleging workplace misconduct.

In an Instagram post, Lizzo's backup dancers, called the "Big Grrrls," said they were "so honored to share the stage with such amazing talent" during the 35-year-old singer's Special Tour, which ended in July.

"The commitment to character and culture taking precedence over every movement and moment has been one of the Greatest lessons and Blessings that we could possibly ask for," the statement reads. "THANK YOU to Lizzo for shattering limitations and kicking in the door way for the Big Grrrl & Big Boiii Dancers to do what we love!"

"You have created a platform where we have been able to parallel our Passion with purpose!" the troupe continued. "Not only for Us, but for Women and All people breaking Barriers."

A montage of video footage from Lizzo's tour accompanied the post. In the clips, the Big Grrrls dance troupe is seen on stage and behind the scenes as they perform dance routines, prepare hair and makeup and pose for photos.

Between the Motions: Students critique sexualized violence policy

On August 23, AMS Council met to discuss the AMS/GSS Health & Dental Plan and revisions to its respectful workplace and sexualized violence policies. Here's what you might have missed.

AMS President Esmé Decker presented an update on the Health & Dental Plan for the upcoming year.

Changes for students include decreases in basic dental coverage from 50 to 40 per cent, in eyeglasses and contacts coverage from \$100 to \$80, in Gardasil (HPV vaccine) coverage from \$250 to \$150 and in per-visit psychology coverage from 100 per cent to 80 per cent, while keeping total coverage at \$1250.

According to Studentcare , basic dental coverage includes fillings, oral surgery, periodontics and some endodontics. Dental offices in the Studentcare Dental Network cover an additional 20 per cent of the cost.

Decker said there is a gap between the collected fee and the plan's cost, forcing the AMS to use its now-exhausted internal reserve fund. They said these changes preserve coverage while refraining from increasing the fee substantially.

Decker also said the plan will offer gender-affirming care, following the March referendum.

Reporting workplace harassment is hard. Here's what workers and employers need to know

When Liz LeClair was dealing with sexual harassment at work, she spent years thinking it was just something she had to put up with as part of her job.

It wasn't until the height of the #MeToo movement in 2018 that LeClair, a professional fundraiser based in Halifax, realized she didn't have to accept the harassment.

"A lot of the things that I felt really uncomfortable about were really things that we had sort of socialized and normalized," she said. In 2019, LeClair wrote an op-ed about her experience with sexual harassment in the non-profit sector. She's now an advocate against gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

She and other experts say workplace harassment and bullying are still often veiled in secrecy, with many people deciding not to report it because of the high personal and professional cost.

Experts say there are systemic and cultural challenges to reporting workplace harassment. That includes non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), which can be used in workplaces to silence people who come forward with human rights complaints.

Half of migrant and refugee women we spoke to have been sexually harassed in Australian workplaces

In our new study, published on Tuesday, we surveyed 701 migrant and refugee women in Australia and found nearly half had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace over the past five years.

This harassment was overwhelmingly perpetrated by men in senior positions, or men who were clients and customers. These women most often experienced workplace sexual harassment when they were in insecure employment, in temporary, casual or contract positions.

We asked the women in our study what they perceived was the motivation for the harassment: they consistently identified sex and gender as a key motivation, as well as race and religion.

It was very rare for participants to have reported sexual harassment in the workplace to a formal authority. It was most common for these women to disclose the experience to friends and family, or informally to someone at work.

The primary reason for respondents not reporting was because they “felt responsible”. Other reasons were uncertainty about where to go, and fears about what reporting would mean for their job security.

Court denies psychiatrist's appeal after assault by MMA fighter patient

The Court of Appeal for British Columbia recently dealt with a case involving a worker who appealed the dismissal of his negligence action against his employer.

The worker, who was a psychiatrist, primarily argued that the trial judge erred in law by failing to ask whether the company discharged its duty to provide a safe workplace in the hospital.

Company's standard of care

Around November 2014, the worker first met the patient, who had not been sleeping, had mood swings, and was erratic and confrontational, in the hospital emergency room.

Days later, the worker again saw the patient and shared the opinion of the patient's general practitioner that he needed to be admitted to the hospital involuntarily under the Mental Health Act.

The staff was then advised that the worker was an MMA fighter and highly skilled in jiu-jitsu and that they should take extra precautions because he could get angry and hurt someone.

First Rick and Morty season since Justin Roiland scandal and exit sets premiere date

First Rick and Morty season since Justin Roiland scandal and exit sets premiere date

Rick and Morty season 7 is officially coming this fall, Adult Swim announced on Thursday. The new installment will feature the first episodes of the hit animated series since Adult Swim parted ways with Rick and Morty co-creator and star Justin Roiland over accusations of domestic violence and workplace harassment.

"It's happening," Adult Swim president Michael Ouweleen said in a statement. "Thanks to the talent of the entire show team, we can all enjoy 10 new episodes that yet again raise the bar for comedy and animation. This season proves that the geniuses at work on Rick and Morty are just getting started."

Adult Swim teased the new season with a wink to the replacement of Roiland in a press release that stated, "Rick and Morty are back and sounding more like themselves than ever!"

The synopsis continued, "It's season 7, and the possibilities are endless: What's up with Jerry? EVIL Summer?! And will they ever go back to the high school?! Maybe not! But let's find out! There's probably less piss than last season. Rick and Morty, 100 years! Or at least until season 10!"

McMaster launches employee survey to examine workplace safety incident reporting and response process

McMaster University is committed to providing and maintaining healthy and safe working and learning environments for all our employees, students, volunteers and visitors. To strengthen this commitment, McMaster invites all faculty and staff to participate in an anonymous survey regarding their experiences with the workplace incident reporting process.

To better understand the level of awareness around the incident reporting process overall, all employees are encouraged to participate in the survey regardless of whether they have previously reported an incident or not.

An incident could include physical or psychological workplace injuries, workplace violence and harassment, emergencies like fires or floods, threats or hazards (wet floors, broken equipment). The current requirement and process is the incident is recorded using this form and is responded to accordingly.

The survey seeks information regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of our current processes in reporting and responding to workplace incidents, to identify opportunities for improvement. While this phase of the survey focuses on the staff and faculty experience, the learnings will be applied to any future work in the area.

The “incidents” referred to in this survey differ from emergency response procedures (please visit the project page for more details).